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AUTHOR Moos, Karen L.; Hartwig, Shirley K.
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ABSTRACT

This paper describes a program for adapting literature for augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) users and students with other disabilities. The program is designed to teach specific language skills that will meet the students' Individualized Education Program goals and to be implemented on a daily basis by classroom instructors. The adaptations consist of specific story boards created with the Mayer-Johnson Boardmaker Program, overlays for AAC devices, and language-based enrichment activities. Stories are first presented by the speech therapist or the classroom instructor using a story board. The boards allow the children to follow along and participate while the story is being read. A Big Mack, an AAC device, is programmed with a repetitive phase. Another AAC device enables children to vocally participate through the Voice Pal Plus, which is attached to plastic animals that repeat the phrases of the story as the child picks up the animal. After the story is presented using the Story Board, enrichment activities based on the story are used to increase the students' language skills. Specific examples of adapted children's books are provided. (CR)

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ADAPTING CURRICULUM FOR AUGMENTATIVE COMMUNICATION

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Karen L. Moos
Simi Unified School District
875 East Cochran Street
Simi Valley, CA. 93065
(805) 520-6191
Internet: moos_f@ix.netcom.com

Shirley K. Hartwig
Simi Unified School District
875 East Cochran Street
Simi Valley, CA. 93065
(805) 520-6191

Garden Grove Elementary School
520-6700

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The term 'full inclusion' describes a placement and not a student. Students who are fully-included in regular 'mainstream' classes have a variety of abilities and disabilities. Mainstream/full inclusion programs have become a true melting pot. The prevalence of full inclusion classrooms have necessitated new approaches to teaching. There are many ways to adapt curriculum to meet the needs of the fully-included student. The program that we are presenting will present one way to adapt literature, based on the California core curriculum, for AAC users and students with other disabilities. This program was developed for two critical reasons:

- 1. Many of the adaptations currently made for handicapped students allow the students to merely experience the curriculum; however, the typical adaptations do not increase the students' skills in any academic area.
- 2. Traditional speech therapy models which pull children out of the classroom for therapy are not effective for many children because they need daily reinforcement of language skills.

Our program addresses these critical shortcomings in the following ways:

- 1. This program teaches specific language skills that will meet the student's IEP goals.
- 2. This program can be implemented on a daily basis by classroom instructors.

The adaptations that we will be demonstrating consist of specific story boards created with Mayer-Johnson Boardmaker Program, overlays for AAC devices, and language-based enrichment activities. Although the literature that we will be presenting is based on pre-school, kindergarten, and first grade curricula, the same principles can be used equally effectively at other grade levels.

The Very Busy Spider by Eric Carle is typical of a book that might be part of a pre-school literature program. This story is first presented by the speech therapist or the classroom instructor using a story board. The story boards are simplified pictorial representations of the story. These boards allow the children to follow along and participate while the story is being read. The story boards also provide picture prompts and sequencing cues that enable students to retell the story verbally, or by pointing to the appropriate pictures as someone else provides the verbalization. A Big Mack, an AAC device market by Ablenet, is programmed with the repetitive phrase 'She was very busy spinning her web.' Another AAC device enables children to vocally participate: the Voice Pal Plus is attached to plastic animals that repeat the phrases of the story as the child picks up the animal (i.e.: when they pick up the cow it says 'Do you want to eat some grass?').

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After the story is presented using the Story Board, enrichment activities based on the story are used to increase the students' language skills. The first activity for this story is one in which children are required to place cut-out spiders on a drawing of a boy. The children are requested to 'Place the spider on the boy's head', etc. They are then required to tell where they put the spider. The responses are also programmed on an Intro. Talker (Prentke Romich) which enables non-verbal children to respond.

This activity teaches vocabulary for basic language concepts, body parts, receptive and expressive language, simple sentence structure, and listening and following directions. Another enrichment activity emphasizes association skills and memory: the students are provided with two piece puzzles that have one piece with the animal and the matching piece containing the activity that the animal suggests in the story. For example, one puzzle piece would have a picture of a goat--the matching piece would have a pictorial representation of 'Do you want to jump on rocks?' The children are required to find the matching pieces and put them together. This activity reinforces the story, teaches associative skills, as well as helps children with fine motor skills and visual perceptual skills.

The kindergarten story presented is part of the California kindergarten required curriculum, 'The Gingerbread Boy' by Joe Jones. As in the pre-school lesson described above, as each story is read, a Story Board is used. The Holly Com (AAC device) allows the non-verbal students to participate in retelling the story and answering questions. A Big Mack with a gingerbread boy on top responds with 'Run run as fast as you can, . . .' when activated. Popular enrichment activities in many kindergarten classes for this story are having classroom children make gingerbread cookies and eat them. Another adaptation of this activity is necessary to make it effective for long-term use, as many of our students need many repetitions of an activity. The gingerbread man is made of construction paper. The children put the body parts in the correct places and add eyes, nose, mouth, buttons and shoes. The children use AAC devices to express what they have done. Through the enrichment activities, the concepts of same and different, following directions, simple sentence structures, and answering specific questions are taught.

At the first grade level, the stories that are adapted are from the Houghton Mifflin Literary Readers (the reading series currently being used in many school districts throughout California). The story presented is titled 'One More Thing Dad' by Susan L. Thompson. The story board for this is particularly simple and very concrete. Only the key ideas of the story are depicted. By simplifying the board, the children can easily retell the story. A McCaw (Zygo) is programmed to allow non-verbal children to retell the story and answer questions. The McCaw is programmed with only the basic elements of the story. The story tells of Caleb wanting to take specific items outside with him. He counts each item as he gathers it. In the story, a request to take an orange is expressed in six sentences. On the story board, as well as on the McCaw, the request is depicted with two pictures, an orange and the number one. The McCaw is programmed only to say 'Caleb took an orange' and 'That's on.' By eliminating all but the basic story elements, the children are able to understand the story as well as use sentence structures and vocabulary closer to their cognitive or developmental levels in retelling it.

After the story is presented, activities based on the story but designed to enrich the child's language skills are introduced. Using picture communication boards and paper 'cut out' representations of the items that Caleb took, the students give Caleb the proper items. This activity is designed to reinforce the vocabulary of the story, emphasize memory skills and sequencing. Another activity involves a picture of a sack in which Caleb will place his items. The children choose items to put in the sack and then must count how many things are there. This activity adds the teaching of number concepts to the other language activities.

The ACC devices discussed above are meant to be descriptive, not prescriptive. Clearly, the selection of augmentative communication devices must be appropriate for the specific abilities of the student.

The stories are adapted so that children with a variety of abilities and disabilities both cognitive and physical can participate in the curriculum. From the students who participate by activating a Big Mack for the repetitive line in a story or biting off the head of the gingerbread man, to the child who retells the story using the picture board for prompts--every child has an opportunity to actively increase his/her language skills.

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